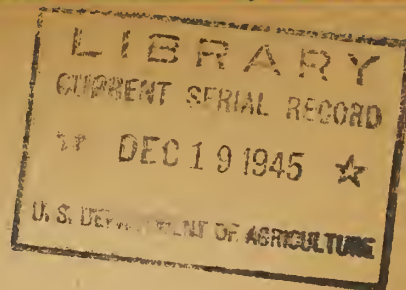


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TIMELY FARM TOPICS NO. 49  
(Farm Science Serves the Nation No. 28)



#### WHAT A HEN WANTS IN A HEN HOUSE

A transcribed interview between John Baker, Chief, Radio Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and Henrietta the Hen. Recorded December 6, 1945. Time, without announcer's parts, five minutes and 40 seconds.

#### ANNOUNCER'S OPENING AND CLOSING

##### OPENING

ANNOUNCER: (LIVE)

And now by transcription...from the U. S. Department of Agriculture... We learn what a hen wants in a hen house. Yes sir, we've got some first-hand information today, straight from old Biddy herself, on what she wants in her post-war home.

The hen will be interviewed by John Baker, Chief of the Radio Service of the Department of Agriculture.

##### CLOSING

ANNOUNCER: (LIVE)

You've heard another talk in the series -- "Farm Science Serves the Nation."

For further details -- on building laying houses for poultry -- write to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., for Circular 738, "Laying Houses for Poultry."

But if it's definite plans you want -- then it's a mighty good idea to write to the State Extension Service. (GIVE ADDRESS.)

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WHAT A HEN WANTS IN A HEN HOUSE

A transcribed interview between John Baker, Chief, Radio Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and Henrietta the Hen. Recorded December 6, 1945. Time, without announcer's parts, five minutes and 40 seconds.

JOHN BAKER: (TRANSCRIPTION)

You know -- that was the silliest dream. You see this interview with a hen was just a dream. I haven't figured out just what caused it -- maybe it was the sandwich I ate before I went to bed -- or maybe it was the heavy dose of facts and figures about poultry that I got out at Beltsville during the day -- that's the Department of Agriculture's Research Center, you know. Well -- whatever caused it -- here's what happened -- and it all seemed so logical at the time.

CACKLE -- FADE

HENRIETTA: Well look who's here!

BAKER: John Baker is the name. And you are -- ?

HEN: Henrietta. What's your business, young man?

BAKER: My business is housing.

HEN: Whose housing?

BAKER: Your housing.

HEN: You mean you're interested in what I think of housing?

BAKER: That's it. Houses for hens. Any ideas?

HEN: Any ideas! What I've got to say about hen housing would fill a book! Of all the dark, crowded, stuffy, cold, drafty, lousy, --

BAKER: Oh come now, Biddy. Relax.

HEN: And don't call me Biddy!

BAKER: All right, all --

HEN: Times have changed since you were a boy!

BAKER: True enough.

HEN: That old Biddy you're thinking about didn't lay more than 50 or 60 eggs a year!

BAKER: Probably not.

HEN: The best hens nowadays lay at least 200 eggs a year. Some lay as many as 300.



BAKER: Times have changed. And so have hen-houses.

HEN: Before you talk about housing -- why don't you learn something about our habits?

BAKER: Such as --

HEN: We're really a lot more sensitive than you might think!

BAKER: I can tell you're the nervous type.

HEN: My nerves are just all on edge! See how fast my pulse is? Feel that!

BAKER: Like a trip hammer. Maybe it's the weather?

HEN: Oh I'm always this way. But I do hate sudden changes in the weather -- and cold drafts! They give me a bad cold every time!

BAKER: I'm the same way. Henrietta, I feel sure you have some excellent ideas on housing.

HEN: Well I should -- after all I've been through!

BAKER: If you will consent to be interviewed -- on what you want in a post-war home -- I shall be only too glad to record your remarks.

HEN: You're going to quote me?

BAKER: I am. "What a Hen Wants in a Laying House."

HEN: As told by Henrietta?

BAKER: Right. Henrietta the Hen.

HEN: Let's go! Put down "Location."

BAKER: Location. Now of course you want your house on fairly high ground?

HEN: Isn't that one good way to get natural drainage away from the house?

BAKER: It is. And you want your house to face South.

HEN: Not necessarily.

BAKER: Why, don't all hen houses face South?

HEN: They don't have to. Just as soon have a house that faced Southeast, or East.

BAKER: So you'd get the sun earlier in the morning?

HEN: Yes. And not so much sun -- on a hot afternoon.

BAKER: Makes sense all right. Now you like plenty of room?

HEN: Young man, I like plenty of room in the house and in the yard and on the nest! Never saw a hen house yet -- with enough nests!

BAKER: Well just how many nests --

HEN: Can't we have at least one nest for each five to seven hens?

BAKER: Five to seven. That seems like a reasonable request.

HEN: I never could bear to stand in line for a nest! And is it too much to ask to have a nest big enough to lay an egg in?

BAKER: Not at all. Want to give dimensions?

HEN: No. I don't like figures. Look 'em up in a bulletin.

BAKER: All right. I'll do that.

HEN: Now put down "Light."

BAKER: You mean artificial light?

HEN: Any kind of light -- just so it's good. We need light to eat by -- and if you want us to lay more eggs, give us more artificial light in the winter time.

BAKER: And how much light?

HEN: Well, how much space do you have in mind.

BAKER: Oh, say a pen 20 feet long..

HEN: If you have electricity -- we'll be satisfied with a couple of 40 to 60 watt lights, with reflectors.

BAKER: And put 'em over the feed hoppers?

HEN: Where else would you put 'em. Do you like to eat in the dark?

BAKER: No, I don't.

HEN: Well! And so we can see to go to roost -- dim the lights just before you turn 'em off, or leave a 10-watt light burning. There's nothing gets me more upset -- than to stumble around in the dark looking for a roost!

BAKER: I know just how you feel. Now would you care to express an opinion on eating arrangements?

HEN: "Good feed and plenty of it," I always say. Especially in the winter.

BAKER: Do you approve of small portable feeders or troughs?

HEN: I do. And keep 'em filled up.

BAKER: And you like plenty of room when you eat?

HEN: Plenty! Never could stand to be pushed around!

BAKER: Well how much space, --

HEN: Look it up in a bulletin. And while you're about it -- look up the figures on how much water we drink! May surprise you!

BAKER: Then in your post-war home, --

HEN: I want some of those automatic fountains, with a dripping pan. Some class!

BAKER: Some class! And I'm sure your wants will be considered, Henrietta, by folks who build laying houses for the modern hen.

HEN: Just tell 'em to get well-bred hens to start with, and keep 'em comfortable and well fed -- and they'll get a lot more eggs. And you can quote me on that!

BAKER: Thank you -- Henrietta!

COCKLE -- FADE

BAKER: Well that's the way it happened, folks. And when I started hunting around for a bulletin, to look up those figures -- I found a brand new publication, Circular No. 738, on designing laying houses for poultry.

To give you an idea of what it contains -- here's part of the Table of Contents: Types of laying houses...building details, including foundations and floors and roofs, walls and ceilings, insulation, vapor barriers...fixtures -- such as roosts and nests and feed hoppers and waterers.

If you'd like a copy, it's Circular 738. And the title -- "Laying Houses for Poultry," published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

But -- now get this -- if you want plans to follow, the place to write for that information is your own State Extension Service.